

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 112083
ORIGIN EB-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00
DODE-00 DOTE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 FAA-00 L-03 SS-15
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APPROVED BY EB:JLKATZ
EB/TRA:JRATWOOD
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O 022301Z MAY 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY BERN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 112083

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAIR, FR

SUBJECT: CIVAIR: PAN AM CHANGE OF GAUGE

1. A PAN AM OFFICIAL IN NEW YORK HAS BEEN CALLED BY AN
AIR FRANCE OFFICIAL WHOM HE KNOWS PERSONALLY AND TOLD THAT
PAN AM 727 AIRCRAFT WILL BE SEIZED IN PARIS ON WEDNESDAY,
MAY 3, PRESUMABLY FOR OPERATING CONTRARY FRENCH LAW AND/OR
BILATERAL. PAN AM IS TAKING REPORT AT FACE VALUE AND WILL
HAVE ITS FRENCH ATTORNEYS PRESENT AT AIRPORT FOR INBOUND
FLIGHT AT 1555 (THERE IS NO OUTBOUND FLIGHT WEDNESDAY) TO
HANDLE SITUATION. HOWEVER, SINCE PAN AM'S ATTORNEYS
ADVISE THAT UNDER FRENCH LAW SEVEN DAYS NOTICE MUST BE
GIVEN, IT IS NOT CERTAIN THAT SEIZURE ACTION WILL BE TAKEN
WEDNESDAY.

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2. WE DO NOT BELIEVE WE SHOULD PROTEST OR EVEN MENTION
THIS REPORTED ACTION IN ADVANCE, IN PART BECAUSE ITS
AUTHENTICITY CANNOT BE GUARANTEED.
3. HOWEVER, IF AIRCRAFT IS, IN FACT, SEIZED OR OTHERWISE
PREVENTED FROM ARRIVING OR DISCHARGING TRAFFIC, EMBASSY

SHOULD ENTER AN IMMEDIATE ORAL PROTEST THAT WE REGARD THE ACTION AS CONTRARY BILATERAL AGREEMENT AND THAT IT WILL FORCE U.S. AUTHORITIES TO RECOMMEND COUNTERMEASURES. THIS

COULD PRESUMABLY BE DONE WHEN ECON MINISTER MEYERSON SEES DE SEDOUY WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON IF ACTION HAS BY THEN BEEN TAKEN.

4. IF PAN AM OPERATIONS ON WEDNESDAY ARE REPEAT OF THOSE ON MONDAY AND TUESDAY, MEETING WITH DE SEDOUY CAN BE CONFINED TO GENERAL REPETITION OF U.S. POSITION. IF FRENCH WISH TO HOLD FURTHER DISCUSSIONS ON LEGAL ISSUES, WE ARE OF COURSE PREPARED TO DO SO. ADDITIONALLY, EMBOFF SHOULD ENTER LOW-KEY PROTEST OVER DEPARTURE DELAYS INFLICTED ON PAN AM FLIGHTS (PARIS 14030), MAKING POINT THAT WE WOULD HAVE TO VIEW A PATTERN OF HARRASSMENT AS EQUIVALENT TO ACTUAL DENIAL OF OPERATIONS, THUS LEADING TO RETALIATORY STEPS. VANCE

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